8. The process of forming a horizontal blind set as recited in claim 5 and further comprising the step of unbundling said ladder cords adjacent the respective second ends of their first and a second vertical cord portions to disassemble said cord and louver assembly from its unitary status.--

A replacement page of abstract is enclosed.

REMARKS

Currently in the case, after amendment, claims 1 - 8 are pending and rejected.

This Amendment responds to the aforementioned Office Action, wherein the claims as originally presented were rejected under Title 35 of United States Code, §§112 &102. The Examiner's remarks have been carefully considered and, in view of the cited art, the claims which have amended to more particularly point out the distinctly claimed what Applicants regard as the subject matter of this present invention, it is sincerely believed that the claims which remain in the instant case patentably distinguish over all the prior art references. It is respectfully requested that this Application be re-examined in view of the following remarks, that the rejections be withdrawn, and that allowable subject matter be identified.

The points raised by the Examiner in the written office action will be responded to in the order they were discussed by the Examiner in the Office Action, followed by general comments.

With regard to the objection to the drawings, a proposed drawing amendment is enclosed. In addition, an amendment to the specification using the new numeral "40" agrees with the proposed drawing amendments.

A replacement abstract is enclosed which replaces the word "provides" with "has", in response to the objection to the abstract.

The paragraph on page 10 has been replaced as stated above in congruence with the proposed drawings changes.

Next, the Examiner objected to the wording of claims 1 and 5 as well as to the wording of claims 7 and 8; all of which have been corrected by amendment. Note that the parenthetical set off requires the third phase to be modified by the first phrase. The comma between the first and second phrases is omitted to further show connection.

Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 over U.S. Patent No. 6,119,757 as anticipated by Judkins et al. *Judkins et al.* appears to concentrate on the bottom rail as a string keeping and storage site. *Judkins et al.* attacks the problem encountered when a lower plug in the bottom thicker slat becomes worn with repeated adjustment and insertion (column 2, line 40), as well as the time it takes to pack the cord. The goal is "repeated disconnection and re-connection of the lift cords and ladders (from the bottom rail or thicker bottom slat) without otherwise deteriorating the connections. *Judkins et al.* also

shows a configuration using outside lift cords which pass outside the rails and next to the ladders. The invention of *Judkins et al.* relates to the use of the bottom rail (at column 2, line 67) "...is length adjustable so that the cord ladders can be shortened to take up slack when the length of the blind is altered and then reconnected afterwards to give the customized blind a finished appearance." Thus the system being provided and disclosed is a mechanical improvement to the bottom (rail or slat) which has improved cord storing structures.

In the claimed invention, a package including a bottom plugged rail or slat is provided in a kit with a series of slats and an overly long ladder set so that the kit is facilitated for use with varying head rail sets (for example the right and left cord control type, or the cord pull and wand control type, or others).

Claim 1 is drawn to a set which includes ladder cords and left cords and where ends of the lift cords are extended through the apertures in the louvers and attached to the plugs in the base louvers. It is a "ready to go" set for attachment to a head rail of choice.

Claim 1 has been amended to emphasize its kit nature, namely that it is provided with excess lift cord and ladder cord which will enable it to be pres-selectively chosen for combination with many different types of top rail.

Judkins et al. attacks the same old problem in the same old

way. The problem is one of adjustment of a completed blind set to a different length window. The solution is for *Judkins et al.* to free the bottom rail for removal, slats adjacent to the bottom rail for removal and for cutting to be followed by re-attachment to the bottom rail.

The present claimed invention teaches the provision of a bundled, ready-to-go combination of made up slats and bottom rail with a generous length of excess top ladder cord and lift cord which can provide the ability for the user to select a type of head rail system for use with the combination. This is completely opposite to the method of *Judkins et al.* in which the design starts with the head rail and a long series of slats to be selectively shortened from the BOTTOM.

Applicant device can ALSO be shortened from the bottom if such is necessary later on. Such necessary instances include mis measurement by fractions of an inch, or in situations where a horizontal blind set has been in use for a while and where it is moved to a new window of shorter length.

Into claim 1 has been added further wording for clarity including the provision of excess length of cord for the ladder portion and the lift portion to emphasize the kit nature of the claim. Two ladder cords are described, but clearly the claim covers more than two. Nothing in *Judkins et al.* teaches or illustrates the combination claimed. *Judkins et al.* is concerned solely with providing shortening ability at the bottom

end of a horizontal blind set.

Claims 2 and 3 include bundling of the free, overly long ends of the channel cord and lift cord respectively to make a neater, more compact kit. Since no excess lengths are taught in *Judkins et al.*, there is nothing to bundle as taught in the claim.

Claim 4 adds the channel and component assembly rail and verbiage for complete kit. No combination of the cited art has shown a kit provided in this form, and thus this claim is clearly allowable.

Claim 5 includes the device described in claim 1 but claims the process of taking the basic kit with overly long ladder cords and vertical lift cords and stringing them through the bottom of a channel and component assembly. Nowhere is that taught in any of the cited art patents, and especially not *Judkins et al.*

Claim 6 teaches something most certainly not attainable in *Judkins et al.* but which is doable in the disclosure of the invention, namely ADDING, as well as subtracting, louvers. Only where an excess length of upper ladder or lift cord is provided can a user successfully lengthen from the top (or subtract from the top) especially before making the final connection. None of the prior art references, and especially *Judkins et al.* disclose or teach this.

Claims 7 and 8 deal with unbundling as an added precursor step to the use. Since nothing in the cited art relates to such

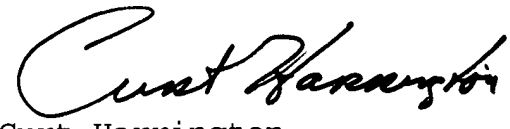
steps nor the overall method of providing a ready made kit, claims 7 and 8 are in condition for allowance.

Applicant requests reconsideration and ultimate allowability of the case, including all of claims 1 - 8.

The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's Attorney at the number below between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, if such will advance this case.

Dated: October 18, 2002

Respectfully submitted:



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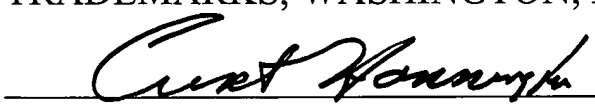

Curtis L. Harrington

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Specification:

Each of the louvers 31 include an opening shown as an oblong slot 35 through which a vertical elevation cord 37 extends. The vertical elevation cord 37 extends through a relatively small aperture 39 at the top of the base louver 19 and extends through the bore 21. Ideally, the lower ends of the vertical elevation cords 37 may be secured by forming a knot [39] 40 after the vertical elevation cords 37 pass through plug 23 in order that the suspension of the base louver 19 further act to keep the plug 23 in the bore 21. Ideally the excess length of the vertical elevation cords 37 will be tied into a bundle for shipping purposes as it is intended for cord and louver assembly 15 to be shipped, handled and inventoried as a separate item. Such tying, along with the tying of the vertical cord portions 27, will act to keep the cord and louver assembly 15 together as a neat bundle before such vertical elevation cords 37 and vertical cord portions 27 are untied to begin the sizing and assembly steps.

In the claims:

1.(Amended) A cord and louver assembly comprising:

a pair of ladder cords, including a first and a second ladder cord each ladder cord having a first and a second vertical cord portion each having a first and second end, said ladder cord including a plurality of spaced apart horizontal cord portions each having a first end connected to said first vertical cord portion and a second end connected to said second vertical cord portion, adjacent horizontal cord portions forming, with said first and second cord portion of each of said first and second ladder cords, a ladder opening;

a plurality of louvers, each louver within a ladder opening of each of said pair of ladder cords, each of said plurality of louvers having a first and a second elevation cord opening;

a base louver having a first and a second bore, each of said first and said second bores for accommodating an end plug;

a first end plug[,] having an aperture, for fitting within said first bore of said base louver;

a second end plug[,] having an aperture, for fitting within said second bore of said base louver, said second ends of said first and second vertical cord portions of said first and second ladder cords secured by said base louver and said first and said second end plugs, said first ends of said first and said second ladder cords extending beyond a ladder opening occupied by a louver farthest from said base louver by a length greater than required for connection to a channel and component assembly of a horizontal blind set;

a first vertical elevation cord, having a first end and a second end, and extending through each said first elevation cord openings of said plurality of louvers, and said aperture of said first end plug and affixed

adjacent said first end of said first vertical elevation cord to secure said first vertical elevation cord first end from pulling free of said first end plug, said second end of said first vertical elevation cord extending beyond a first ladder opening of said first ladder cord occupied by a louver farthest from said base louver by a length greater than required for connection of said second end of said vertical elevation cord to a channel and component assembly of a horizontal blind set;

a second vertical elevation cord, having a first end and a second end, and extending through each said second elevation cord openings of said plurality of louvers, and said aperture of said second end plug and affixed adjacent said first end of said second vertical elevation cord to secure said second vertical elevation cord first end from pulling free of said second end plug, said second end of said second vertical elevation cord extending beyond a first ladder opening of said second ladder cord occupied by a louver farthest from said base louver by a length greater than required for connection of said second end of said vertical elevation cord to a channel and component assembly of a horizontal blind set, said first and said second end plugs also for securing said first ends of said first and said second ladder cords.

2.(Amended) The cord and louver assembly as recited in claim 1 and wherein said first and said second vertical elevation cords are bundled together adjacent their respective [second]first ends of their said first and second vertical cord portions to secure said cord and louver assembly as a unit.

5.(Amended) A process of forming a horizontal blind set comprising the steps of:

in a cord and louver assembly having:

a pair of ladder cords, each ladder cord having a first and a second vertical cord portion each having a first and second end, said ladder cord including a plurality of spaced apart horizontal cord portions each having a first end connected to said first vertical cord portion and a second end connected to said second vertical cord portion, adjacent horizontal cord portions forming, with said first and second cord portion, a ladder opening;

a plurality of louvers, each louver within a ladder opening of each of said pair of ladder cords, each of said plurality of louvers having a first and a second elevation cord opening;

a base louver having a first and a second bore, each of said first and said second bores for accommodating an end plug;

a first end plug[,] having an aperture, for fitting within said bore of said base louver;

a second end plug[,] having an aperture, for fitting within said second bore of said base louver;

a first vertical elevation cord, having a first end and a second end, and extending through each said first elevation cord openings of said plurality of louvers, and said aperture of said first end plug and affixed adjacent said first end of said first vertical elevation

cord to secure said first vertical elevation cord first end from pulling free of said first end plug;

a second vertical elevation cord, having a first end and a second end, and extending through each said second elevation cord openings of said plurality of louvers, and said aperture of said second end plug and affixed adjacent said first end of said second vertical elevation cord to secure said second vertical elevation cord first end from pulling free of said second end plug, said first and said second end plugs also for securing said first ends of said first and said second ladder cords;

extending said second ends of said first and said second vertical elevation cords through respective first and second small apertures in the base of a channel and component assembly for exiting said channel and component assembly at a location to enable users to pull said first and said second vertical elevation cords to raise and lower said base louver;

extending said second ends of said first and a second vertical cord portions of said a pair of ladder cords through respective openings in said channel and component assembly;

attaching said second ends of said first and a second vertical cord portions of said a pair of ladder cords each to a respective rotation member of said channel and component assembly, to form said horizontal blind set.

7.(Amended) The process of forming a horizontal blind set as recited in claim 5 and further comprising the step of unbundling said first and said second vertical elevation cords adjacent their respective second ends to [dissemble] <u>disassemble</u> said cord and louver assembly from its unitary status.

8.(Amended) The process of forming a horizontal blind set as recited in claim 5 and further comprising the step of unbundling said ladder cords adjacent the respective second ends of their first and a second vertical cord portions to [dissemble] <u>disassemble</u> said cord and louver assembly from its unitary status.

<u>Abstract</u>

A modularized horizontal blind set [provides] <u>has</u> a configuration which is easily modifiable, reduces inventory costs and waste. The only ultimate waste created from the modularized horizontal blind set is the trimming of ladder and elevation string or cord during assembly of a cord and louver assembly to a channel and component assembly. A cord and louver assembly, includes a base slat, a series of slats inserted into a ladder cord, and a set of elevation cords strung through the slats, with the ladder cord and elevation cords preferably properly tied off to enable a rapid layout and interconnect with a selected channel member. In forming a custom sized assembly, workers can utilize a chart based upon the vertical height of the top channel, and the spacing of the ladder chord.